

Henry J. "Hank" Gieseler, 92



Henry Joseph Gieseler, 92, formerly of Chatham and Spring Lake, N.J., passed away on July 7 in Sarasota, Fla. Born Dec. 24, 1924, in Lawrence Hospital, Bronxville, N.Y., Hank, the son of Henry Ernest and Esther Wellbaum Gieseler, grew up in Crestwood, N.Y. In 1942 he entered the mechanical engineering program at Cornell University, where he also was on the crew team, and graduated in three years. While at Cornell he joined the U.S. Navy in 1943, and following graduation he attended USN Midshipman School and was commissioned as an ensign in November 1945. He served in the Pacific post-World War II (1945 - 46) and was honorably discharged as a Lt. JG in July 1946. He taught engineering at Cornell from September 1946 through September 1949 (while earning a master's in mechanical engineering), and then joined Curtiss-Wright in 1949, and Wigton Abbot from 1951-59. On May 26, 1951, he married Patricia Watts of Westfield, N.J. They made their home in Chatham, N.J., with their children Dorian, born 1952, and Brian, born 1957. For a year and a half, they lived in Schenectady, N.Y., moving back to Chatham in 1961.

Hank worked for Rutgers University for 20 years, supervising HVAC in rebuilding the college's three campuses and medical facilities. He also worked for over three years for the Hillier Group, Princeton N.J. He retired from Rutgers in 1989.

From 1975-90 they lived in Spring Lake, N.J., moving to Sarasota in 1990. Hank had an active life there, playing tennis, bridge and, as a volunteer, feeding the homeless every Friday for 10 years and, at Mote Marine, working with the scientists for 15 years. He was also a volunteer advisor to the County Commissioners of Sarasota County Planning Board. Hank loved Scottish terriers (Roxi and Ceilidh), classical music, theater, sailing and boating. He was an avid reader and active learner throughout his life.

He was predeceased by his father in 1953, his mother in 1981, his brother Arnold in 1996 and his sister Barbara in 2014. Hank is survived by his wife of over 66 years, Patricia; his children Dorian and husband Don Greenbaum of Duxbury, and grandchildren Micah Greenbaum of Carver and Jocelyn Albertson (husband Neil) and great-grandchildren Kaylan and Orianna Albertson, all of Duxbury; son Brian and wife Linda (née Shea) of Azusa, Calif., and grandchildren Caroline of Arlington, Va., and John Brian (Jack) of Falls Church, Va. All his grandchildren have fond memories of their "Pa."

A military burial was held at the Sarasota National Cemetery on Aug. 14. Those wishing to make a donation in Hank's name are welcome to do so to the Salvation Army or with the charity of their choice.